

VZCZCXRO9589
PP RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHDK #1382/01 1801303
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 291303Z JUN 07
FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8675
INFO RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCRFA/USDA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA PRIORITY 1518
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DAKAR 001382

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SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/EPS AND AF/W
STATE PLS PASS TO USTR/CHAMILTON

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [EAGR](#) [EINV](#) [EFIN](#) [EAID](#) [EAIR](#) [SG](#)
SUBJECT: ROUNDTABLE ON SENEGAL'S AGOA FORUM PRIORITIES

REF: A. STATE 58394

[1](#)B. DAKAR 1054

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On June 19, Senegal's Ministry of Commerce organized a stakeholder roundtable to assess the state of preparations for the GOS' participation in the July 18-19 AGOA Forum. EconOff and representatives from the West African Trade Hub/Dakar participated. Senegal is not yet well organized to offer its priorities for the Forum (apart from requesting simultaneous translation at all events), and, in general, neither the GOS nor the private sector has made a significant effort to help Senegalese producers benefit from AGOA preferences. END SUMMARY.

TO DATE, SENEGAL HAS LITTLE TO SHOW FOR AGOA

[1](#)2. (U) On June 19, Cheikh Sadbou Seck, Director of External Trade at the Ministry of Commerce, hosted a roundtable discussion to assess the state of Senegal's preparation for the July 18-19 AGOA Forum in Accra. Participants included representatives from the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Agency for Investment and Export Promotion (APIX), the Senegalese Agency for Export Promotion (ASEPEX), the National Agency for Senegalese Civil Aviation (ANACS), private sector groups like the National Organization of Senegalese Fruit and Vegetable Producers and Exporters (ONAPES), as well as representatives from the West Africa Trade Hub/Dakar (WATH/D), EconOff and Econ Assistant. Seck's goal in calling this meeting was to assess progress made on Senegal's AGOA promotion efforts since last year's Forum in Washington, DC, and June and September 2006 U.S./Senegal meetings in Dakar to establish priorities for the Senegalese delegation to this year's Forum.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Unfortunately, the participating GOS agencies had not yet focused on AGOA preparations. Mr. Seck charged the ASEPEX representative to coordinate efforts to propose an agenda for a follow-on meeting. WATH/D reps summarized trade statistics demonstrating that, in comparison to other comparable African countries, Senegal's exports to the U.S. are very low. EconOff recommended that the Senegalese delegation not limit its comparative analysis to West African neighbors, but, instead consult widely with African counterparts who are successfully using AGOA to expand exports on a broad range of products and not focus exclusively on textiles and commodities. The December 2006 introduction of direct flights between Senegal and the U.S. by Delta Airlines was noted as a positive step. The ANACS representative asserted that Senegalese civil aviation authorities are working hard to obtain ICAO Category One status for Dakar's international airport to solidify Delta and South African Airlines' U.S. routes. Participants underscored the need for improved air cargo links between Senegal and the U.S.

[1](#)4. (U) Representatives from the private sector highlighted the need

for the GOS to establish a point of contact for AGOA information both in Senegal and in the U.S. and pointed out that there has been zero progress over the past year in promoting franchising as an effective investment model, which was one of the priorities for the Senegalese delegation coming out of the 2006 AGOA Forum. There were also requests that simultaneous translation be provided for all the panels and workshops, not only the plenary sessions.

THE GOS IS NOT EFFECTIVELY PROMOTING AGOA

15. (SBU) To date, GOS (and private sector) efforts to take advantage of AGOA have been underwhelming. ASEPEX, in particular, has not followed-through on its role as the lead agency for partnering with the WATH to promote AGOA and assist potential Senegalese exporters. Senegal is the only AGOA eligible country in West Africa without an AGOA Resource Center (ARC) -- even Guinea-Bissau has one -- which should be the first point of contact for exporters who wish to learn more about exporting using AGOA, i.e. how to apply the correct harmonization codes to ensure duty free entry, whether a product is AGOA eligible, how to obtain textile visas, where to find related trade data, etc.

16. (SBU) In 2006, former Minister of Commerce Mamadou Diop Decroix and USAID designated ASEPEX as the ARC host institution. USAID/WATH has an in-kind donation of computer equipment, training, and other materials for Senegal's ARC as soon as ASEPEX decides to open it. The host government is responsible only for engaging (and paying the salary of) an ARC coordinator. In WATH's opinion, ASEPEX wants the USG to significantly and directly fund ASEPEX's AGOA efforts; computers and other information materials are not enough. Similarly, a National AGOA Committee was launched in 2006. However, to date, no actions have been taken except one meeting of a steering committee in September 2006 in which the Minister and the Ambassador participated.

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17. (U) Visit Embassy Dakar's Intranet site at <http://dakar.state.gov/htdocs/section/econSection.aspx> and Embassy Dakar's SIPRNET Web site at <http://www.state.gov/p/af/dakar>.

Jacobs